

# Psychologie du Bouddha (Lausanne Oct 2009)

Bhante Bodhidhamma · International Talks · 56:43

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*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa* (three times)

*Homage to the Buddha, the blessed noble and fully self-enlightened one.*

This evening, I want to see if we can understand the Buddha's psychology. But first, a warning.

The Buddha's companion for twenty years was Ānanda. He was the Buddha's cousin. He had a phenomenal memory and was a man of very great intelligence. Once, while walking with the Buddha, he said, "You know, I think I understand this dependent origination." And the Buddha said, "Oh no, Ānanda, this teaching is very profound." So keeping this in mind, we are going to try to understand the profundity of this teaching of interdependence.

The foundation begins with the word *avidyā*, which means ignorance. But this ignorance is not culpable. It's a state of not knowing. And it's because of this that an error is made. From this error, we create an illusion. So often in Theravāda texts, *avidyā* is translated as delusion or illusion. There are two stages: the stage of not knowing and the stage of illusion, confusion.

If we take what happens to us when we are born, even inside the womb, we begin to feel sensations like our mother's voice. Suddenly we arrive in the world and we are there, so we arrive in the world with no knowledge of what is going to happen, of what is going to happen to us. So we must make sense of this world.

As you know from our own psychology, somewhere around the age of three or four months, an object emerges from this mass of sensations. And this is normally our mother. From this point, we begin to separate ourselves from the world. So at a given moment, we see, "There, that's outside and that's me, that's inside." Then we must learn to create a relationship with this world.

The relationship we are going to create is based on an error. The error is believing that the world is going to give us happiness. We develop two sorts of attitudes toward the world. We seek to acquire what we think is going to make us happy. Everything that makes us unhappy, if what makes us unhappy is too great for us, then at that moment we run away. These two attitudes of aversion and fear, the Buddha makes into just one word.

So in the texts, you see on one side *moha*, illusion. You see *lobha*, which means acquisitiveness, which transforms into greed. On the other side, you have *dosa*, which is aversion. Once we begin to act either from acquisition or from aversion, then all the miseries of the world fall upon us.

So this is the first product of this wheel of interdependence, of dependent origination. These creations are called *saṅkhāra*. We will return to this in a little moment.

So from birth and at each instant, two factors work together. The first is the act of cognition, and on the other side you have body and mind. Body and mind include all sensations, emotions and thoughts. We can say the psychophysical organism. But part of this psychophysical organism is the act of cognition.

For example, you have a television. All this information comes onto this screen. It's on the screen that the image is going to manifest. So this manifestation corresponds to the act of cognition.

Then the Buddha divides body and mind into six senses, but also the mind, here where the mind contacts the brain, this is where the mind makes its first perceptions. So this includes not only perceptions that come from the five senses, but also what happens in the brain and also what happens inside the mind itself.

Unfortunately, we separate what comes from the heart and what comes from the mind. On one side we have the heart and the emotional world, and on the other we have the mental and all the thoughts we create. But according to Buddhism, all this works together. So when I speak of the mind, I also speak of the heart. So the act of cognition also puts on the screen all the thoughts and emotions that appear. This you can experience during meditation. You can be outside this process and see that there is an act of cognition.

The Buddha uses the word *paccaya*, which means dependent on. So dependent on cognition, body and mind are going to appear. If there were no cognition, at that moment you would not know that you are this psychophysical organism. So this organism depends on the six senses. These are what we call the given. To be a human being, you need that. Or at least a conscious human being. We cannot say what people experience when they are in what is called a vegetative state.

Now, because we have this cognition, this body and the six senses, we can have contact. Contact needs three factors: an object that can be here outside or inside like a thought, you need the sense base, and then the act of cognition. For example, if I walk in a dark room, I can see nothing. There is no object. If I am blind, I see nothing. And when I sleep, when I lose my ordinary consciousness, I see nothing either. You can do this with all the senses.

So at the basis of contact, there is what we can say is simple perception. For example, I look at an object, I see the blue color and I see the form. I can also understand that this is a cushion. And so something happens, a relationship is created between both the external world and the internal world, a duality with the world.

Suddenly, we like certain things and we don't like, we hate certain things. Sometimes we like something very strongly and then very strongly the opposite. Even the most neutral feelings will have a tendency to go toward I like something or I don't like. That's a given. This is how we live in the world.

This duality would not cause us any problems. This is how the Buddha exists. He knows what is good and what is not good. Remember his last meal. He was offered a piece of pork, or what pigs eat. When he put that in his mouth, he must have felt something, because in the end, it gave him gastroenteritis that killed him. And he said, before dying, not to blame the person who gave him the food. In reality it was a blessing that it was his last meal.

So this position of "liking or not liking" is now called *vedanā*. So this includes all sensations, all feelings in the body, emotions as they are felt in the body. All of this is included under the term *vedanā* in Buddhist language. We discern them as being pleasant or unpleasant.

This is where this original error manifests. Remember, we seek happiness in the world. And this also means seeking happiness in this body-mind complex. We eat food because it tastes good on the tongue. Otherwise, we would not eat it, usually. Because of this illusion, we now form an active relationship: we want or we don't want.

So there, we have this line where all sensations appear, moment after moment. And we play the game of wanting this, not wanting that, etc. This is often translated as "craving."

At this point, in your meditation, if you can reach this point, and if during meditation you can catch this moment where you feel greed, for example for food, or you experience emotions that are difficult and you feel this resistance of not wanting to go there, if you have found this position of the objective observer, so there is a clear distinction between the one who knows and the reaction to the feeling, ask yourself when you are in this position: "Am I suffering?"

According to the Buddha, at that moment, there is in reality no suffering. But it's the next stage that actually drowns us in dissatisfaction. And this is called *upādāna* or grasping. What happens at this moment is identification or possession. This is where the self manifests. The moment the "I" comes into play, in relation to something that is not beneficial, there is suffering. There is no suffering until the "I" manifests.

At this point, it's very difficult to prevent the next moment from appearing. In fact, I would say that you cannot really stop it. Sometimes, in meditation, you are able to see how one is sucked into the object. And that's identification. For example, you might have experienced in your daily life: you're talking to someone and you feel irritation. Thanks to our meditation, we can feel it. But we are in the conversation. And before we know it, we have lost this separation. And there you are, you are angry. Even at this gross level, you can see identification. I should rather say that it's at the moment when the anger has come out that you can see where you fell.

From the instant there is this identification or this possession, the next step is the act of *kamma*. We do something, either in our head from thoughts, or in speech or in action. And at that moment, something has entered that was only at the stage of potential. For something that is only at the level of wish to be put into

action, there needs to be reinforcement. There must be energy to enter into the desire for it to manifest. And that's the will. So that's why the Buddha says that will is action, so will is *kamma*. You cannot separate will from action. Even in science, once you have thrown a stone, you cannot separate the force from the stone.

In dependent origination, the Buddha calls this *bhava*, "becoming." So this act of becoming is recreated permanently. The self is recreated permanently. Each time the self becomes, it reinforces this becoming.

Once an action has been activated, it has a beginning, a middle and an end. In this action of beginning, middle and end, it has reinforced certain habits. So each time I get angry, I reinforce this habit of getting angry. And thus the wheel turns.

This is understanding dependent origination, moment after moment. For us as meditators, this makes the most sense. But often, it's spread over three lives. The first stage is ignorance, illusion, the habits we have formed in a previous life. When we are reborn again, this conditioning returns in this new life. According to the life we are going to lead, certain conditions will be developed and others will not be. After death, the process of rebirth, life and death manifests again. All this is motivated by a misunderstanding.

So this misunderstanding manifests at one point of dependent origination, just this space between feeling and grasping, desire. So between *vedanā* - what we like and don't like - and the next stage which is wanting, not wanting. And this is where you have the escape door from suffering.

This is why our meditation is concerned with how we react to something. So during sitting, if we feel pain in the knee, that's unpleasant *vedanā*, an unpleasant feeling. When we resist, well that's not wanting. If we can let this resistance pass, we can create a new relationship with pain: equanimity. When we are equanimous, there is no suffering.

It's more difficult when it concerns things that please us. Because when we indulge in something, we are happy. But we don't see the consequences until the moment arrives. For example, when the mind is lost in a beautiful thought, you can see that there is a desire to go there, to create this world. If in our meditation we are not ready to bring back attention, we can suddenly spend a whole meditation period lost in dreams.

So leaving the dream and returning to the body, we can feel excitement or joy. If we remain sufficiently present, we can see the desire that wants to go back into the dream. It's like a magnet. If you can stay present with this and wait for this energy to dissipate, suddenly we can experience a mind without desire. And that is contentment.

Even here, we can have a hint of the Buddha's mind. Even in these small moments, we can begin to have an inkling of what it is to live in the world without desire. So at that moment, we can have a small spark of what it is to live in this world with the Buddha's mind, without desire.

Now, my understanding has been influenced by Mahāyāna teachings, but the teacher with whom I am most in resonance is a Thai master called Mahā Boowa. Do you know him? Some of you may have read him.

In the Theravāda tradition, *Nirvāṇa* is often described as a state of unconsciousness. But this somehow cannot be true since the Buddha was conscious. So it may be that Theravāda has described what happened to the Buddha after he died. We can only imagine what happens when a Buddha dies. As we know, in the Theravāda tradition, the Buddha, at the moment of death, enters *Nibbāna* - complete, total *Nirvāṇa*.

Mais dans la tradition Mahāyāna, le Bouddha peut revenir sur Terre par compassion, ou dans d'autres royaumes, pas seulement sur Terre.

Quand nous commençons à pratiquer *vipassanā*, nous découvrons ce poste que nous appelons l'observateur. C'est celui qui sait, connaît. Donc le mot que je préfère en anglais, c'est l'acte de connaître, de savoir. C'est le connaissant. En utilisant un mot comme ça, nous arrêtons de le transformer en objet.

Quand nous méditons, nous stoppons cette roue de l'origination dépendante. Nous la voyons se dérouler. Et donc ce processus se base à l'intérieur de ce champ de conscience. Et donc ce connaissant, ce champ de conscience, c'est *Satipaṇṇā* — l'attention et l'intelligence intuitive.

Il y a une phrase dans les Écritures Theravāda. Je crois que c'est la seule fois qu'elle apparaît. Elle donne une description très positive de ce niveau d'attention et la traduction est comme suit : « Il y a une conscience qui n'est pas teintée d'aucun sens. Sans limites » — ce qui signifie qu'il ne peut y avoir aucun phénomène. Les phénomènes créent des limites. « Et dans toutes les directions, remplie de lumière. »

Et ça, c'est la réponse à une question. La question est : « Où est-ce que les quatre éléments disparaissent ? » Le Bouddha dit que c'est une mauvaise question. Mais plutôt : « Où est-ce que ces quatre éléments ne trouvent pas leurs pieds ? » En d'autres mots, où ne peuvent-ils pas être trouvés ? En d'autres mots, où est-ce que nous ne pouvons pas les trouver ?

Donc la terre, le feu, le vent et l'eau — c'est le monde matériel. Mais ça fait référence au monde matériel tel que nous l'expérimentons. Donc c'est la base de toutes nos expériences. Donc le Bouddha dit qu'il y a une conscience qui n'a rien à voir avec le monde phénoménal. Et ça c'est l'expérience du *nirvāṇa*.

Quand nous sommes dans cette position de l'observateur objectif, nous sommes à un seul pas de cette expérience, même si c'est une expérience courte, momentanée.

Quand vous êtes dans la position de l'observateur, celui qui sait, celui qui ressent, il y a la connaissance de quelqu'un qui sent, sait et ressent. C'est comme une réflexion. C'est par exemple quand vous regardez la télévision et vous voyez votre reflet dans l'écran. Donc maintenant, vous pouvez soit regarder la télévision, soit voir votre reflet en train de regarder la télévision.

Parfois dans l'assise le sentiment de l'observateur peut être très fort. Donc, puisque c'est un objet, cela ne peut pas être vous. Il ne peut pas être vous, il ne peut pas être le vrai vous, c'est un objet. Le ressenti d'un soi ou le ressenti d'une présence — donc ce sentiment d'une présence, ça ne peut pas être vous puisque vous êtes en train de vous observer. Donc si c'est un objet, ça ne peut pas être le sujet.

Maintenant, nous pouvons, par un acte de volonté, nous déplacer dans cette position à l'intérieur de nous-mêmes. Et par un acte de volonté, nous pouvons nous placer dans ce poste d'observateur. Parce que ça fait partie du pouvoir du soi. Mais le soi ne peut pas se débarrasser du soi. C'est un grand problème.

Donc c'est là que les enseignements du Bouddha sont vraiment les plus subtils. Donc il dit, continuez d'observer l'objet avec l'intention de voir les trois caractéristiques. Et à travers notre concentration, le sens du soi disparaît. Et pendant un moment, il n'y a que le fait de cette connaissance. Il y a une absorption. À ce point, nous expérimentons la pure conscience. Donc ces petits moments sont des instants de *nirvāṇa*. Mais je ne les appelle pas le *nirvāṇa*. Ce sont juste des moments d'attention pure où il n'y a pas de souffrance.

Et même dans la vie de tous les jours cela peut être une expérience. Donc quand vous êtes en train de faire quelque chose de bénéfique, votre cœur est dans cet état de bonté et pendant cette action, vous perdez toute notion de conscience de soi. Et quand vous redevenez conscient de vous-même, vous pouvez regarder cette action et vous rendre compte que deux choses n'étaient pas présentes : la conscience de soi et le temps. Le temps n'existe pas quand vous demeurez dans cet instant présent qui est toujours présent.

La raison pour laquelle il est toujours présent, c'est parce que cette connaissance n'a aucun début et aucune fin. Il n'a pas de naissance et de mort. C'est l'inconditionné.

Et cela, le Bouddha le déclare clairement dans son propre vers de victoire. Donc le Bouddha témoigne : « J'ai parcouru les vies les unes après les autres. Mais maintenant je t'ai vu, constructeur de maison. J'ai cassé les toits et les murs. J'ai atteint l'esprit inconditionnel. » *Asaṅkhatam cittam*, c'est les mots du pāli. L'esprit inconditionnel, la conscience inconditionnée. Nous n'avons pas vraiment une parole pour exprimer cela. « Et toutes mes défaillances ont été complètement détruites. »

Cela est notre destin. Nous pouvons nous réjouir. Même si le chemin est difficile, nous devons entreprendre ce chemin. Et vous qui habitez en Suisse et grimpez sur ces montagnes, vous n'avez pas de problème.

Et cela, nous pouvons l'appeler cet espoir existentiel profond. Nous sommes tous destinés à être pleinement éveillés. Je peux juste espérer que mes mots ont pu vous aider un peu, que vous puissiez vous libérer plus tôt que tard. Merci.

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